

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claim 1 to further define the invention, and previously canceled claims 19 and 20. Accordingly, claims 1-18 are presently pending for consideration.

In response to the Election Requirement of February 28, 2008, Applicants hereby elect Group I, claims 1-9, drawn to mechanical energy coupling means, as identified in the Requirement, with traverse. Applicants respectfully traverse the Requirement on grounds that Group I, claims 1-9, and Group II, claims 10-18, are linked so as to form a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 and 13.2.

Under PCT Rule 13.1, although the application shall relate to one invention only or to a group of inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept, PCT Rule 13.2 goes on to qualify that when there is a group of inventions, the requirement for unity is fulfilled when there is a technical relationship among those inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding “*special technical features*.” Here, the expression “*special technical features*” is defined as those technical features that define a contribution which each of the claimed inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art.

Applicants respectfully assert that the present invention is directed towards an apparatus for applying ultrasonic energy to sewage slurry. According to the present invention, the applicator, extender, and booster are integrally formed by a forging and/or casting process. By contrast, conventional ultrasonic devices are manufactured by providing separate components that are subsequently secured together by bolting or welding. According to the present invention, by integrally forming the ultrasonic apparatus by a forging and/or casting process, the apparatus offers far improved longevity and lower servicing requirements compared to conventional ultrasonic devices. One reason for this is that conventional ultrasonic devices are prone to failure by separation of components at their points of attachment to one another (page 3, line 7 to page 4, line 1, of the as-filed application).

Accordingly, the “*special technical features*” of the present invention are that the applicator, extender, and booster are integrally formed by a forging and/or casting process, since it is these technical features that define the contribution the claimed invention makes over the prior art. Independent claims 1 and 10, as presented herewith, both recite these special technical features. In particular, claim 1 is directed to the ultrasonic apparatus being

formed by the integral forming process, and claim 10 is directed to the integrally forming process for manufacturing that apparatus.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 10 are linked so as to form a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 and 13.2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submitted that claims 1-9 and 10-18 have unity, whereby the Restriction Requirement should be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,
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